

4-1945

**HARTFORD, CONN.
COURANT**
Circ. D. 47,872 - S. 80,138

JUL 20 1945

Mayor Going On Tobacco Farm Tour

Accepts Growers Invitation After Complaint by Nine Girl Workers

Mayor Mortensen disclosed Thursday that he has been invited by representatives of the Shade Tobacco Growers' Agricultural Association to make a tour of Central Connecticut tobacco farms next week to investigate labor conditions there, and that he has accepted the invitation.

The Mayor conferred late Thursday with Paul L. Putnam, director of the University of Connecticut's Farm Labor Department; Ralph C. Lasbury, Jr., director of the shade growers' association; and Leo M. McCann, principal of Northeast Junior High School and Farm Labor investigator for the Connecticut Extension Service, regarding the 21-mile walk of nine Negro girls from an Enfield tobacco farm.

The Mayor said the group told him that, following an investigation, they had determined that the girls, one of whom was 13 years old, walked home "through a misunderstanding." He was told, the Mayor said, that "if the girls had waited around they would have been taken home in a bus along with other workers."

It took the Negro girls, who live in the Bellevue Square District, 11 hours to walk home from the Hunting Farm in Enfield where they had gone to work after they said they had been recruited in Hartford to work in a shed. The girls said they refused to work when they discovered they had to work in open fields in the rain.

Conditions Outlined.

The Mayor said Mr. Lasbury, Mr. Putnam and Mr. McCann outlined working conditions on the tobacco farms, and described the system of recruitment. "They felt," the Mayor said, that the children walked back to Hartford through a misunderstanding, and that they should have waited till the others were ready to make the trip.

"I have been invited to inspect conditions on the tobacco farms sometime next week," the Mayor said, "and I have accepted the invitation. I do not know yet the day on which I will go."

The Mayor said he was told by the group, which asked for the conference, that ration books which

were taken from the children to verify their ages, have been returned to them. He said he was told that the books contained only shoe ration stamps.

Mr. McCann, earlier in the day, said he has been checking the stories of the children regarding their experiences at the farm and their contacts with Walter Malbouf, supervisor of the Consolidated Cigar Corporation farm who, the children alleged, refused to drive them back to Hartford in a bus unless they worked in the open fields.

Mr. McCann said the girls did not tell him they were refused a ride home. Mr. Lasbury said that "the girls were old enough and experienced in tobacco work to know that if they remained there they would be taken home." He said one girl admitted to him that "they were told they would be taken home at 4:30."

Mr. Lasbury said it was a mistake on the tobacco company's part to have taken the ration books as a proof of age.

Meantime, Edna M. Purtell, an investigator for the State Labor Department, conferred with Acting Police Michael J. Godfrey. Chief Godfrey had no comment to make on conference, other than to say that he "conferred with Miss Purtell for 50 minutes on the tobacco situation."

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Negro Girls Complain To Mortensen

Say Dispute at Tobacco Farm Caused 21-Mile Walk Home

Mayor Mortensen disclosed Wednesday that nine Negro girls, the youngest of whom is 13 years old, had walked more than 11 hours Tuesday to their homes in Hartford's Bellevue Square district from a South Windsor tobacco plantation. They had been taken to the plantation to work. According to the story told to him, the Mayor said, the children had understood they were to work in a shed and had refused to go to work in the open fields during a rainstorm.

The Mayor also said that "in at least two instances" Ration Books Number 3, he had been informed, had been withheld from children in the group. Ration books, it is said, are required to be shown to indicate the age of the child, when birth certificates are not available.

Connecticut

Names Superintendent.

Walter Malbouf, of South Windsor, was named by Mayor Mortensen as the superintendent who allegedly ordered the children into the open fields, "even though they claimed they had been hired to work in the sheds," and who is said to have refused to furnish transportation back to Hartford that morning for the juveniles. According to the Mayor, Mr. Malbouf is employed on the farm as a supervisor for the Consolidated Cigar Corporation.

Alfred M. Silberman, corporation treasurer, said Wednesday night that all supervisors employed by the firm have "strict orders" to obey Office of Defense Transportation regulations forbidding unscheduled trips of trucks or buses used for transporting farm workers. In obeying such orders, Mr. Malbouf would have been unable to return the children to Hartford before the regular afternoon quitting time, the corporation official stated.

Two of the girls required medical attention Tuesday night as a result of what they claimed was a 21-mile walk to Hartford, the Mayor said. According to an account of the return trip given to Mayor Mortensen late Tuesday night by parents of the children, the nine girls left the plantation about 8:45 a. m. Tuesday, "got lost on the way home in the pouring rain," and arrived in the city about 7:30 p. m. Tuesday.

Speaking for the supervisor, Mr. Silberman issued this statement Wednesday night about the incident:

"When Mr. Malbouf learned that one of the girls was only 13 years old, he refused to let her work. That 13-years-old girl did not do any work on that plantation Tuesday or any other day. When he refused to let the 13-years-old girl go to work, the other girls refused to work and demanded that he take them back home in the bus."

"Several of those girls worked on the plantation up until about a week ago, then stayed away about a week, reporting again Tuesday morning when the bus went into the city to pick them up. All those experienced girls knew in advance that the only work available for that day (Tuesday) would be work in the open fields."

Complains to Mayor.

Raymond F. Johnson, of 40 Bellevue Square, whose 14-years-old daughter, Shirley, was one of the nine children, related the following account of the incident in a personal complaint he made late Tuesday night to Mayor Mortensen:

A woman resident of the Bellevue Square district recruited the children Monday and told them to be ready to leave on the bus by 6:20 a. m. Tuesday. While informed by the woman that the work would be under a shed, the children nevertheless were ordered into the open fields by Mr. Malbouf. They pro-

tested, however, because of the rain.

About 8:45 a. m. Tuesday, the children sought shelter inside the bus, whereupon the supervisor ordered them out of the vehicle and

back to work. The girls persisted in their refusal to work in the fields and requested Mr. Malbouf to return them to Hartford. The supervisor, telling them that they would have to work if they wanted a return ride, left them standing in the rain and drove the bus away.

Without money, the children started homeward, obtaining only one ride, a short lift by a truck driver, and one which took the group about two miles out of their proper route.

Mr. Silberman denied the children's assertions about Mr. Malbouf's refusal to take them home. According to the corporation official, the supervisor informed the girls about the ODT regulations, told them that he would take them home at the end of the day, invited them to seek shelter for the day in nearby sheds and then drove the bus away to move other workers to another location.

"Although Mr. Malbouf told the children to wait for him, they were gone when he returned after moving the other workers," Mr. Silberman said.

Termed 'Deplorable.'

"It's hard to believe that such a deplorable incident could take place here. I am amazed to find that there wasn't better supervision provided to prevent this occurrence," Mayor Mortensen said.

"I had hoped that the voluntary agreement announced recently by the Connecticut Shade Tobacco Growers Association, Inc., would have provided for necessary surveillance by the Farm Labor Department of the extension service of the University of Connecticut, which, according to that agreement, was to be responsible for the supervision, care and treatment of children employed on Connecticut farms."

"While I am Mayor of Hartford, I will not knowingly tolerate the irresponsible recruitment of children on the streets of Hartford for such exploitation. It is abominable that there is no law to protect our children from such labor exploitation," Mayor Mortensen asserted.

A spokesman for the State Labor Department explained Wednesday that the growers' association agreed "recently and publicly" to institute "on a voluntary basis" several regulations pertaining to the employment of minors, "practically the same regulations that the recent General Assembly refused to enact into law."

Mr. Malbouf's alleged retention of the ration books was referred "to the proper authorities," Mayor Mortensen said Wednesday.

At local headquarters of the Office of Price Administration, an OPA official said Wednesday that an enforcement agent has begun an investigation of the complaint about the ration books. The official stated that "ration books are government property and therefore they must not be improperly held" by persons other than those to whom they originally are assigned.

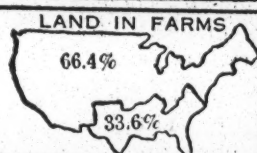
Doctors Called.

The woman who recruited the children was ill Tuesday and unable to go with them to the plantation, but she told them on Monday to take their ration books with them to prove their ages if they did not have birth certificates. Mayor Mortensen said he was told by Mr. Johnson. When the nine children reached home Tuesday night, the 13-years-old child and another girl reported that Mr. Malbouf had kept their ration books. Mr. Johnson complained to the Mayor.

Physicians were called Tuesday night by the parents of two of the girls when the parents discovered that the children's feet were swollen, according to Mr. Johnson's statements to Mayor Mortensen.

The South's Share . . . 1940

in shaded area



FARMERS
48.6%



FARM
BUILDINGS
VALUE
29.6%



FARM
MACHINERY
AND
IMPLEMENTS
VALUE
21.5%



LIVESTOCK
VALUE
27.7%



Source: U. S. Census

Southern Patriot Chart

AT THIS moment, as we turn from war to face the problems of peace, we are all determined to win a better life for ourselves in the South, if only for the sake of the millions of young Southern men, now returning from the battlefields to their farms.

We must solve the age-old problems of Southern agriculture. Over 40 percent of the Southern people live on farms. Most of them are poor. We must find the answers if the whole South is to prosper.

Southern farmers have given distinguished service to their country during the war. Their labor helped produce the abundance needed to defeat fascism.

The war has begun to change the Southern countryside. Where cotton and tobacco once dominated the land, peanuts, soybeans, sweet potatoes, vegetables and fruit and livestock are beginning to flourish. The volume of food production even in 1942 was 17 percent higher than in 1935-39. The South is coming closer than ever before to feeding its own people, as well as supplying food for the Armed Forces and lend-lease. And millions of acres of land are getting a rest from the old soil-wasting crops.

With the war, millions of people left the farms—for the Army and Navy, and for the new war industries both in the South and in the rest of the Nation. In the three years 1939 through 1941, alone, over two and a half million persons left Southern farms.

Southern Farms

THE PEOPLE, THE LAND, THE NEED

The Southern Farmer

Finally and most important, the Southern farmer is now enjoying a greater measure of prosperity than at any time since the 1920s. Wage rates for hired workers on Southern farms have also steadily increased.

In the Southeastern states, the years 1930 to 1940 saw a 44 percent reduction in cotton acreage; and corresponding increases in other crops: hay 111 per cent, oats 193 percent, wheat 45 percent, potatoes 40 percent, an increase in the number of hogs and pigs 45 percent, cattle 30 percent and milk production 30 percent. During the same period, there was a 17.3 percent jump in the average size of farms in the Southeast.

The New Deal farm programs also reduced the number of tenant farmers 17.4 percent and the number of farm owners in the Southeast increased 9.5 percent.

In spite of the progress of Southern agriculture during the past decade, these facts remain:

—The South has one-half the Nation's farmers, one-third of its land, but only one-fourth of its farm income.

—Despite its wealth of grasslands, the South lags in production of livestock with less than one-third of the nation's cattle.

The average "census" farm in the Southeast in 1940 had less than two cows, 30 chickens and four hogs and pigs.

—In food and feed crops, the South has the lowest average yield per acre in the country.

—Six million acres of South farm lands are idle.

What does this mean in the life of the Southern farmer?

First his income. The total income per Southern farm worker is only half that of the worker outside the South, only a fourth of the Southern non-farm worker.

Malnutrition is widespread in Southern rural areas. On many thousands of farms, especially tenant farms, every available foot of ground is planted to cash crops—cotton and tobacco. The usual diet is the

It is rare for any Southern farmer to have running water, a flush toilet, bathtub, or electric lights in his home. In the case of a tenant farmer or share-cropper, it is almost unknown.

The story of rural housing in the South is the story of many thousands of families living in unpainted, dilapidated

shacks, with cracks in the walls, roof and floor. In some areas the windows are without glass; in the walls, roof and floor. In some areas the windows are without glass, solid wooden shutters are closed to keep out rain or wind.

Water comes from a shallow, often polluted well or is carried from the nearest branch. About one-seventh of the families are without privies. Large families live in two or three rooms.

Add to this picture of life on the Southern farm the poor health among the rural people, the lack of doctors and hospitals; the poor educational facilities and high illiteracy, and it becomes clear why the attention of the whole South must be directed to the solution of the farm problem.

We have looked at the farmer—now let us look at his farm. to try to understand why Southern farmers are so poor.

Southern farms are overwhelmingly cotton and tobacco farms. These two crops now provide two-thirds of the cash income of Southern farms.

Forty-nine percent of Southern farmers do not own the land they till; they are the tenant farmers. Another 7 percent rent part of their land. Share-croppers, who pay the rent on their land

with a share of the crop they produce, make up 38 percent of the South's tenant farmers.

Not only the farmer, but the soil, suffers from the dominance of cotton and the tenant system.

Cotton, tobacco and corn use up the natural richness of the land with great speed. Fields planted to them year after year wash out and wash away much more quickly than fields on which legumes are planted in rotation with cash crops. Yet six acres of Southern cropland out of ten are planted one season after another in cotton, tobacco and corn.

As a result, 61 percent of the nation's badly eroded land is in the South—an expanse of land as large as South Carolina, gullied and washed away. Twenty-two million acres have been ruined beyond repair, and an area as large as Oklahoma and Alabama has been severely damaged.

The size of Southern farms averages only about half of that of farms outside the South, according to the 1940 census.

The backward methods used by Southern farmers also keep them poor. For example, though the South has one-half of the nation's farmers, it has only one-fifth of the nation's farm implements.

The farmer outside the South has another advantage, we hope temporary. He has learned the value of cooperative. In 1939, 23 percent of United States farm operators did business through cooperative, compared to only 10 percent of Southern farmers.

The Issue: Democracy

All the factors—one crop farming, the tenant system, the small farms, the used up and eroded soil, the backward methods—are results, and in some cases, hangovers of the old plantation-slave-system of the South. This system, unprofitable for the South at best, was defeated in war, but never completely wiped out. The big planters lost the Civil War but won a compromise peace, and a democratic system of land ownership—symbolized by 40 acres and a mule for every Southern farmer, Negro and white—has not to this day been completely substituted for the old plantation system.

NAT CALDWELL

Atlanta Constitution - Ga.

Cotton Growing Outlook in South Is Pessimistic

Atlanta Ga.

(Editor's Note: This is the second of a series of four articles dealing with the future of cotton farming in the south. It was written by Nat Caldwell, a member of the staff of the Nashville Tennessean, after weeks of research throughout the south-land.) 1-17-45

A restoration of the "auction block" of slave days with potential cotton pickers calling the turn and riding out to the fields in the trucks of the planter who bids highest for their services is a commonplace in many small towns. These towns are the first stopping place of the farm Negro, when he abandons his shack on the plantation. During the war years he has lived there on an average of a few months picking his crop and collecting his "settlement money" or picking for wages to get a stake for the long trip out. There nine, and 10, and 11 dollar a day wages wait him in the war plants.

This year for the average cotton planter high labor costs will have pared to a fraction of their 1942 and 1943 sets the final income from cotton. Favorable bank balances and high rates of farm mortgage retirement that have made the planters feel richer than since the latter years of World War I are now in many communities almost stabilized.

"If we have two more years of war and have to make two more cotton crops with labor as scarce and as high, some of us will be borrowing money to buy mechanical cotton pickers when they get here," one planter wrote in to the Delta Cotton Council at Stoneville, Miss., the other day.

It is against this background of the present that "businessmen producers" in the nation's largest cotton producing areas stand looking wistfully to the day, when International and John Deere and Allis-Chalmers will come through with volume production of pickers. And the day when Graham-Paige will have its fire spitting cultivator ready to kill all the weeds for three years, until because of failure to reseed, they will practically have disappeared. Then will the hand chopper be gone with the hand picker.

It is against a background of cotton pegged at 22 cents and able to be dumped on the world market only through a substantial federal subsidy that they look to the future. They see rayon and other synthetic fibers taking deep bites out of their domestic markets at a 25-cent price for the staple types. 1-17-45

They see rayon and nylon sub-

stituted for cotton in most tires population is two and three and for military planes and heavy duty four to one and the Negro lives military vehicles absorbing a potential market for half a million displacement of an estimated bales of cotton per year. The same 400,000. 1-17-45

substitution goes on in many On thousands of marginal cotton southern cotton textile mills, most ton farms operated by both white of them within a few miles of the and Negro farmers in Mississippi cotton fields, and most of them and eight other southern states producing a garment or a sock the cut in price to save cotton's which will have the southern cotton farmers' family as its principal market. the abandonment of cotton as a crop. The mechanical picker operated by the town garageman on a custom basis or owned by a co-operative might save the day for cotton on a few of these farms.

They know that present stored surpluses equivalent to a full year's war swollen demands are a constant threat to the stability of cotton's price structure, regardless of the level at which it may be fixed.

The switch away from cotton for clothing amounts still to only a comparatively few thousands of bales per year. But the war will be over one of these days and 22-cent cotton still will be with the south, if there should be no change in national cotton policy.

Cotton at this price will have to stand up against rayon and other synthetics for a variety of uses. These substitutes, superior to cotton in some respects, will be produced by an industry capable of narrowing the price differential within certain limits at will. This quaint situation arises from the strong government wartime policy for encouraging rayon production with provision for full amortization of new plant costs in a maximum of five years.

The cotton producer, big cotton brokers like Assistant Secretary of State Will Clayton, and even the conservative farm bureaus of the southern states believe that the plug must be pulled on cotton prices if it is to survive in competition with synthetics. It may even be dangerous to wait until the end of the war if inroads into normal markets are not halted.

"A return to 10 or 12 cents per pound without the mechanical cotton picker will mean 30 cents to 50 cents a hundred for Negro and white pickers. Only four of the 110 Negro cotton pickers interviewed in four states said they'd ever be willing to pick for that amount again. They do on relief first. Do the Negro tenants who, until this war have far exceeded the day pickers and choppers as factors in production, the return of 10-cent cotton means an annual cash in come of less than \$200 for a family of four.

With the machine pickers the Delta planter can pay skilled labor \$5 to \$10 per day as operators and still come out with a profit at 10 cents. In the 18 Delta counties of Mississippi where the Negro

A deliberate effort on the part of these farmers to improve the quality of their staple and raise their yields, planting only the amount that they have the hands in family to pick, might save cotton as a cash crop for thousands more. They would prove the advantage of the premium prices for top grades that careful handpicking alone can produce. But the great mass of cotton labor will be on the move.

COTTON MACHINE AFFECTS NEGROES OF SOUTH

Cincinnati Voice
Many Negroes
Cincinnati, Ohio
Will Migrate to
Other Sections
1-13-45

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Jan. 6

"It'll destroy a million jobs" — warned the Rust brothers, John and Mack.

Thus, with a feeling amounting almost to guilt, did those young inventors first tell the nation of their new cotton picking machine more than a decade ago.

The picker the Rust brothers had then is to International Harvester's latest model as the child's tinkertoy airplane is to the B-29.

International, Allis - Chalmers, which has the Rust patents, and John Deere, all are racing now to be first on the market after the war with the cheapest and best machine mass production can provide. 1-13-45

And what of the picking machine's impact upon the human beings whose very living will be altered?

What of the half or three-quarters of the 9,423,000 human beings, now cotton's creatures?

The sight of the picker rumbling past his four-room shack on the 17,000-acre King

and Anderson plantation near Clarksdale, Miss., was enough to provoke 81-year-old George Kelly, Negro, to among its largest stockholders, philosophic and prophetic, were apprehensive on

comment:

"It'll be here picking all the cotton before ever the Good Lord is ready for me to quit the fields and go home."

Many Negroes Leave

Kelly had heard of Rayon, knew that cotton at 22 cents a pound "couldn't stay here long," and thought that most of the Negroes, from 20 to 45, already were leaving Coahoma County. And the rest might be gone before the picking machine could get there after the war to take their places.

Roy King, a white man almost Kelly's age, and Edgar Lee Anderson, whose fathers founded the King and Anderson Corp., and who still are among its largest stockholders, were apprehensive on

the same score that Kelly was. King and Anderson have done a dozen things to hold their tenants. But they see the younger Negroes, including most of those capable of picking 250 to 300 pounds per

That is the theory FSA has been trying out now for years with whites and Negroes all over the tenant farmer South. FSA officials and their tenants say it is working.

Vets May Not Stay

Old George Kelly doesn't believe that the returning Negro soldier ever again will be willing to live in the South on small farms, nor that the Negro industrial worker thrown out of a helping us out and sending away job will come home and man around to show us how "stick it out" for more than we ought to be able to feed a few weeks. If 800,000 Negroes are let pay the land out on time," heout there will be a million whites let out.

the South's Delta cotton regions by the hundreds of thousands each year of the war. 1-13-45

Resettlement an Answer

Kelly believes that one of the answers to the "cotton

The Outlook for Southern Cotton

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of four articles dealing with the future of cotton farming in the south. It was written by Nat Caldwell, a member of the staff of the Nashville Tennessean, after weeks of research throughout the south-land.)

From 800,000 to 2,500,000 Negroes and whites will be leaving the southland in the first six years after the war.

They'll be driven out of the fields by an army of monsters 14 feet tall, which soon will be wad- dling down mile long rows, their ugly visceral tubes looping greedily at the white staple-laden stalks, pulling and sucking away at the cotton.

These monsters with their Frankensteinian bulk painted a circus red and their mechanical insides giving out with the sounds of a heavy bomber, are mechanical cotton pickers.

The people of the south who will be displaced by King Cotton's inevitable swap of sweating human backs for machines as a more secure underpinning of his throne will constitute the greatest mass migration since the westward movement swept across the Alleghanies.

Its postwar tide flowing north- ward and westward will blend with and swell a migration to jobs in war industry that already has carried 750,000 whites and an equal number of Negroes out of the south.

The individuals in this black and white mass will be moving out with the intention of staying— either on jobs or on relief—just as those who precede them in the still active southern trek to war industry intend to stay.

For the mechanical cotton pick- er, a potential \$7-a-bale robot sub- stitute for human hands that now refuse to pick for less than \$30 to \$40, is about to be clasped with the grip of necessity by King Cot- ton.

The portent of this change reaches into every phase of the traditional life of the south—and carries a heavy significance for other parts of the nation as well. For San Francisco, which in the first three years of the war has seen a 270 per cent increase in its Negro population, for Detroit and Chicago with their already teem- ing black belts the change spells dynamite.

The Nashville Tennessean has for many weeks had reporters busy examining the facts of cot- ton's life. The scope of their in- vestigations included inspections of the cotton picker in action and interviews with white and Negro creatures of cotton, nationally known sociologists and agricultur-

al economists, farm machinery manufacturers. On the salient facts gleaned from an analysis of Moberley made clear that he was these hundreds of interviews, a great majority of them off-the- record for reasons that are obvious, a very "hazardous business," "a the foregoing basic statement are made.

In token quantities the cotton picker, the flame cultivator, and the improved ginning equipment that will hold grades of machine picked cotton within one class of conditions facing Moberley, and the best hand-harvested staple, al- ready are accomplished facts.

With the world market for Dixie's cotton shrunk till it exists only in the imagination of a few senators and the postwar domestic market fiercely threatened by a war-fattened rayon industry, King Cotton knows that he must scramble and battle to stay alive. And no more than the diabetic demurs at the insulin needle will be demur at the deep-seated social changes certain to result from the complete mechanization of cotton production in the rich delta coun- tries which alone can give him back his competitive price.

That is why all but five of the 53 large and small planters of cot- ton in the rich delta areas of Mis- sissippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and West Tennessee interviewed in re- cent weeks listen with eager hope to the promises of the farm ma- chinery industry for mass produc- tion of the picker before the end of the second year after the war.

That is why they believe so fer- vently when engineers tell them that the cotton picker today is at a stage of technological develop- ment comparable to the tractor in 1913. They'll quote with enthu- siasm the ordinarily dull facts from the census on the early days of mass production in the tractor in- dustry . . . 7,000 in 1913, 10,000 in 1914, 21,000 in 1915, 27,819 in 1916, and 49,504 in 1917. They'll point to the 35 per cent reduction in cost to the farmer in this early five years of expanding tractor production.

"If there are even 50,000 me- chanical pickers on the farms of the south by the end of the sixth year after the war we will have been able to forget all about 22 cents parity and be making money at 10 or 12 cents a pound," de- clared Dean Moberley, planter of Madison parish, Louisiana.

Reminded that 50,000 pickers at the anticipated ratio of displace- ment of one machine to 40 pairs of human hands might mean 2,000,000 fewer cotton picking jobs in the south, Moberley stared at the floor for a minute. Then he de- clared with his original enthusiasm unabated—"I'm still for it."

Moberley sat in front of the bar at the little country club a few miles out of Tallulah, Madison parish seat, and talked. The growing of cotton was to him a very "hazardous business," "a business that might not be in ex- istence a few years after the war unless costs of production could be cut sharply enough to half present sale prices."

Here are the present business conditions facing Moberley, and Oscar Johnson, president of the National Cotton Council, and thou- sands of other growers of cotton, large and small, throughout the south.

Alabama Press

Young Negro Farmers

Members of the livestock committee of the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce are greatly pleased with the success of the first fat calf and stock show held at the Union Stockyards by the Negro boys and girls of the state. Not only did they exhibit 32 fine specimens of their care and attention as young farmers, but they had the most enthusiastic support of members of their race. The large attendance at the event will naturally serve as a great incentive to them in future shows. When the animals were offered for sale the bidding was spirited and the buyers represented all of the best-known colored restaurants, hotels and grocery stores in this part of the state. It was a real event of the future.

What most impressed the chamber members who attended this show and sale was the pride the young Negro farmer boys and girls took in their animals. They had done a good job in nursing and raising their fat stock to the exhibi- tion stage and they had a grand time com- peting against the others. They made a real show of it and had a lot of fun. The stories which will go forth from this sale will have

much to do with encouraging other Negro boys and girls in our rural sections to undertake the raising of prize beef animals. It is an excellent direction to give their energies and interests and all concerned are entitled to congratula- tions on the initial success. Particular credit should go to the Negro assistant county agents of the Extension Service, who gave so much personal attention to encouraging the young stock raisers.—Alabama Journal (Montgom- ery).

THE DEEP SOUTH

War Shortages Threaten Wide Cuts in Cotton Crop
By GEORGE W. HEALY Jr.

NEW ORLEANS, March 10—War threatens to do a more thor- ough job than flood, boll weevi or alphabetical agency in cutting the cotton crop of Dixie.

Planters in the rich section of Mississippi between the Yazoo and Mississippi Rivers, where long staple grows in abundance, are talking of reducing production 30 to 35 per cent. Farmers in the hill sections of Louisiana and Mis- sissippi also plan fewer acres in cotton this year.

The cause lies in the shortage of manpower and of metals needed to manufacture the mecharal pick- ers which many growers say will revolutionize Southern agriculture after the war.

Before the war Mississippi's Ne- groes numbered 1,074,578. Most of them were on farms or in small towns. About 200,000 have left to go to war or to war plants, principally on the Pacific Coast.

Mississippi produced 1,754,619 running bales on 2,350,000 acres in 1944. More than 100,000 bales still were in the fields last month because there were no pickers to gather it. The story in Louisiana is comparable, with 920,000 acres producing 583,751 bales and with about 40,000 bales unpicked.

War prisoners have been tried as pickers, but results have been disappointing. On the contrary, developments of flame cultivators, mechanical pickers and gin im- provements have been heartening to the Southern planter.

News Notes: Neshoba County, Miss., is sure spring has come, because Choctaw Indians have started sleeping on the courthouse lawn. . . . Floods in the Ohio Valley are not worrying residents of the Lower Mississippi basin.

New Orleans faces a meat famine, with slaughtering halted by stringent OPA regulations in- tended to end a black market.

NAT CALDWELL

Constitution — Atlanta, Ga.

The Outlook for Southern Cotton Discouraging

(Editor's Note: This is the last of a series of four articles dealing with the future of cotton farming in the south. It was written by Nat Caldwell, a member of the staff of the Nashville Tennessean, after weeks of research throughout the south-land.)

1-19-45
Eighty-one-year-old George Kelly, former slave who has spent his life growing cotton, doesn't believe that the returning Negro soldier ever again will be willing to live in the south nor that the Negro industrial worker thrown out of a war job will come home and "stick it out" for more than a few weeks.

1-19-45
That is the problem of Chicago and Detroit and San Francisco—Dr. Louis Wirth, University of Chicago sociologist, told this reporter a few weeks ago. He was thinking in terms of the minimum \$150,000,000 estimate of costs for decent housing of only the 315,000 Negro citizens Chicago had before the war. He was thinking how the bill would jump if housing were proposed for the 60,000 who have moved in since the war. He was thinking of the costs of providing housing and public health, and jobs or relief for Chicago's share of the hundreds of thousands who will be leaving the south when the cotton-picker comes.

King Cotton will be wanting desperately to replace them as his slaves with the robot picker that can guarantee him a price competitive with rayon and other synthetic fibers. But from interviews with 110 Negroes, old and young and middle-aged, still in the cotton labor force of Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and west Tennessee, he'll be wanting them to clear out no more than those among them in the most useful age groups to agriculture will be wanting to go.

Dr. Wirth at Chicago, Dr. T Lynn Smith, authority on population migration at Louisiana State University, and Dr. Charles S. Johnson, nationally known Negro sociologist at Fisk in Nashville, have a point to make on the score of Negro migration. They insist that less than half of the total displacement of human labor by the cotton-picker will be that of black men.

1-19-45
If 800,000 Negroes are let out there will be a million whites let out. The Negro has a better chance for the job of tractor driver and picking machine operator and even repairman and machinists than does the "poor white" in the heavy cotton-producing delta regions. The

Hopson plantation at Clarksdale, red clay cracker"—may have Miss., the most highly mechanized cotton-producing unit in the world, with eight late model pickers, using all Negro operators at 40 cents an hour.

And the Hopsons are willing to pay more as the quality of their labor is improved with experience and the training factory engineers of cheap TVA power as a talking point that may completely displace their neighbors have pickers. And they know it and are projecting their labor costs for the future at nine or ten dollars a day with modern housing furnished.

The displaced white, however, will not hail from the delta county. He will be leaving the marginal "hill cotton farm" or the eroded cotton plains, as often a landowner as a tenant. Cotton for him at much less than a 20-cent per pound government loan guarantee will mean he's out of the producing picture.

1-19-45
Oscar Johnston, president of the National Cotton Council, operator for British stockholders of huge cotton plantations at Scott, Miss., and one of cotton's handful of well-informed and realistic spokesmen, has a plan for him to stay. There'll be room in the south for hundreds of thousands of him and for thousands of small Negro cotton growers under Johnston's plan. He'll know that the machine picks at a discount of a full grade and maybe more under the best type of hand-picking. He'll diversify with cotton as one of two or three cash crops. Or he'll produce all he needs to eat on the farm and concentrate on cotton for cash.

He'll join with others of his class of products in the same county or a dozen counties and plant a single improved variety to yield a staple of uniform length, tensile strength and receptivity to dyes. He'll plant no more than his family can harvest with its own hands. He won't own a picker co-operatively with his neighbor because the machine's use would cancel his grade advantage. If cotton's at 10 cents he'll sell his for the market top and make money.

Extension service specialists and county agents in several cotton belt states say, however, that it'll take five years after the war to teach him to follow Johnston's plan. And before that time he'll be broke and gone.

1-19-45
This marginal white farm owner or tenant, who is called by the planters of Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas a redneck or peckewood, in Tennessee and Alabama, a redneck or hillbilly, and in Georgia and South Carolina, a "common

frequently with second mortgages west should be interested selfishly on the planter's land.

Now the planter refuses at least alive.

publicly to consider cotton production as a "way of life." He insists upon his right to see it a business as much as he sees the machine picker only a couple of years down the road. He sees the shacks he's ashamed of, in which 100 families once lived, torn down and burned or used with new lumber to build a dozen new homes to accommodate his new "highwage" machine operator help. He sees 250 head of mules disposed of. The barns they were sheltered in replaced by tractor and machine sheds. The many acres planted to corn and oats and hay to feed his mules soon will be feeding several hundred head of beef cattle at a cheaper price than western or midwestern farmers can possibly handle them.

The cotton picker and to a much smaller extent, the flame cultivator, were the missing links in the mechanization of the cotton farm. On a few larger plantations the process of mechanization already has been carried as far as the tractor and the older tractor-drawn plows, cultivators and planters could go.

Now the missing links to complete mechanization are almost at hand. The incentive to completely mechanize is the need for slicing cotton prices in half. This need is sufficient to terrify the planter who wants to stay in cotton but knows he may have to wait two or three years for the means that will re-establish his grip on a domestic market.

But if the machine should get there too late, and he's forced to leave cotton, there is another road he can turn into. A very few planters in the rich delta lands of the deep south already are far along this road.

1-19-45
They are producing oats—100 bushels to the acre, other small grains at double the best yields in Iowa and Illinois, new varieties of hybrid corn at almost the same high ratio to the midwestern growers. They can do the same thing with soft wheat.

They can feed a million head of near market top beef cattle for half what it would cost to feed them in any other section of the country. They don't know the cattle business. But they are gamblers and willing to learn the hard way.

The Negroes and the poorer whites may be cast out by King Cotton. But the planters will be on hand even if the king himself must abdicate.

Because their climate and their richest land in the nation gives them a leg up if they choose to break in on most any other type of agriculture, the intelligent farmers of the midwest and far

His chance depends upon the timing of the generally anticipated rapid industrialization of the cities and small towns of the central south blessed with the advantage of cheap TVA power as a talking point that may completely displace the old sweat shop. His desire to stop over in the central south, even if there is a job at Decatur, Ala., or Tupelo, Miss., or Nashville, will depend on the difference in wage scales between the proffered job and jobs in "CIO territory," the sociologists say.

1-19-45
The experts feel that in the event of a postwar depression after he's left the south he, too, will take his chances on relief as will the Negro. The trek back of a million and a half of his brothers to starve on the poorest farm land in the south during the early depression years will not be repeated in their opinion.

But the main body of the displaced from both races, even if they should stop over for a year in a town of the central south or to work for a while in the brand-new oil fields of Mississippi, will be moving north and west.

The Negroes will be—not in such quantities as the planters of the deep south might wish, but in quantities substantial enough to be disturbing to the midwestern and western cities—the problem the south at last can share with the rest of the country.

The substantial taxpayer of Omaha, who got in a cab the other day in Chicago with a Tennessee reporter complained—"You southerners are shipping the Negroes up here and unloading them on us. It's not right. You know how to handle them down there. Please keep them."

The head of one of the biggest meat packing firms in Chicago, discussing the problem of Negro personnel with members of his top executive staff, declared: "We have 8,500 of them on the payroll now, all on jobs belonging to white men in the service. When our men come back we're finished with the Negroes."

"Last hired and first fired"—that has always been the job history of the Negro in the northern city.

1-19-45
It has never been the job history of the Negro on the southern cotton plantation up to this good day. Always he's enjoyed a meager sort of "social security" even in the worst times and purchased

SOUTHERN SAY-SO

The Coming of Mechanized Farming in the South
May Be Blessing for Negroes

By M. S. STUART

(The views expressed in this column are those of the writer and do not necessarily express the editorial opinion of The Pittsburgh Courier.—The Editors.)

J. D. RATCLIFF, in Collier's Magazine July 21, predicts the early mechanization of farming—particularly cotton farming in the South. He visualizes the general use of the mechanical cotton-picker, a flame-thrower for weed control, and possibly other inventions of a

labor saving nature in the near future. It is his opinion that the employment of these inventions on



Mr. Stuart

a large scale awaits only the removal of war-time restrictions on the material required for their manufacture. Of course, as has often been stated, one of the widespread results of mechanical cultivation and harvesting of Southern crops would be the displacement of the bulk of the labor which long has been associated with agriculture in this section. If this should happen, it would surely cause an economic revolution of a South-wide scope, directly affecting the condition of Negroes.

8-4-45

IN ONE of the big daily papers of this section, it has already been suggested that colored people would be faced with the choice of one of the following three courses to meet this situation, to wit:

1. Mass migration of farm labor to other sections of the country;
2. Acceptance of a perpetual dole for the workers thus displaced;
3. The development by education, encouragement and training of a strong yeoman class of small farmers, prospective landowners and renters who will produce a large part of their living on the farm, and surplus for the markets.

THE BIG DAILY dismisses number one above as incompatible with the picture of conditions in the Nation and number two as a condition which would be intolerable in the USA. It endorses number three as the only answer; and this is in keeping with pet programs, "Plant To Prosper," for white people, and "Live At Home" for Negroes, which for more than a decade it has been prosecuting. It has commendable features and a noble objective; but it is not the only answer; and without certain radical modifications its progress will be too slow to attract and affect many of the discommoded laborers.

In a remarkably prophetic little book, "Brass Tacks," David Cushman Coyle, in 1936, predicted industrialization, not only for agriculture in the South, but for other sections of the country and in other fields of labor. He said we are entering a new age and that the old concepts of economy would

have to be abandoned, particularly the idea that our major fields of employment must be in the production and manufacture of the material necessities of life. He visualized various service fields for many of those displaced by technology.

MOREOVER, with the coming of mechanized farming in the South will come manufacturing on a larger scale, bringing with it greater concern and activities of organized labor. The leaders in union labor will look upon any large reservoir of idle, cheap, unorganized labor as a menace to the objectives and welfare of their organizations; and probably will move to meet the situation in a definite way. No matter what comes, a comparatively large number of workers will be engaged in the cultivation and marketing of farm products; and if all these should be organized, as they probably will be anyway, it will be better for all concerned.



by JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES

"Better quality cotton grown at lower cost is still the most profitable course for many farmers in the South."

ag. * Herald

My guest today knows cotton, and more. As an executive of the big Avondale Mills, past president of the Alabama Cotton Manufacturers Association, and member of the great cotton family of Comers, he knows the South's white staple from seed to seersucker. And as grandson of a liberal Alabama statesman, onetime Gov. Braxton Bragg Comer; as nephew of Donald Comer, whose name for enlightened industrialism, social leadership is Southwide; and as nephew of Sallie B. Comer La-throp, whose animated books on life with the Comers are read with joyful recognition from Potomac to Rio Grande—he knows the South's best and most intimate traditions:

10-31-45

BY CRAIG SMITH
Executive Vice President, Avondale Mills
When Mr. Graves got Clare Booth Luce and Helen Gahagan Douglas to write his column he may have had to use honeyed words of suasion, but not so with me. I was a pushover. He asked me to write about cotton. To have a subject about which I am supposed to know something cramps my style no little. I don't believe other columnists are usually so hindered.

I am definitely not one who believes that the growing and manufacture of cotton, as we now know it, is on the way out. Tremendous progress has been made in recent years in the development of synthetic fibers, but new uses have also been found, and continue to be found, for the cotton fiber. Cotton has proved its superiority during the war for innumerable uses. At home we have also acquired a new appreciation of cotton. Fabrics made from it have almost disappeared from store shelves, as have many simple articles of cotton clothing. Recently a Fifth Avenue store, which caters only to the carriage trade, advertised a tablecloth as "guaranteed 100 per cent cotton." This advertisement was something new under the sun. American mills are now consuming cotton at the rate of 9½ million bales per year. About 12 billion square yards of cotton fabric are coming off our looms annually. Even though we share a substantial part of our cloth production with our former Allies, it won't be long until we can buy a pair of shorts.

Prices on some articles of clothing have gone up outrageously during the war. At no time in recent years has cotton sold over "parity." Parity is that price which enables the farmer to buy the same amount of goods with a pound of cotton that he could have bought with a pound of cotton during the period from 1909 to 1914. Cotton farmers have profited less than any other major group during the war period. Cotton mills have sold their output at fixed and rigid ceiling prices. Any increase in earnings to the mills has come because of increased volume. The industry as a whole has not averaged more than 3 per cent net profit on its sales during the war period. Anyone who knows what a cotton mill does with a bale of cotton to convert it into en-cloth would not call a 3 per cent profit excessive. A seersucker dress, though, may sell at retail as for \$14.95 and contain 3½ yards of cloth, for which the mill got 51½ cents per yard, or \$1.61. When any element of style enters into the pricing of a garment, it seems difficult for the consumer to get intrinsic value.

Rarely have I seen a man who did not feel entirely competent to

advise the farmer, and particularly to advise the cotton farmer to "diversify." Some of these advisors may have overlooked the fact that the cotton farmer has already acted on their advice. This season he planted only 18 million acres in cotton as against a peak of 45 million acres in 1925. The farmer, though, has learned how to raise as much cotton on a small acreage as he formerly raised on a much larger acreage.

Another fact that self-appointed agricultural advisors sometimes overlook is that there is land in the South which is more profitable when planted in cotton than when planted in any other crop that we know about. There are some acres in Alabama and many more in the Mississippi Delta which will produce more food value in cottonseed than they will planted to any grain. Even if the cotton itself were thrown away, the farmer would still do better to plant that particular land to cotton. Better quality cotton grown at a lower cost is still the most profitable course for many farmers in the South.

The improvement that the cotton farmers of the Southeast and particularly those of Alabama have made in the quality of their product is deserving of more recognition than it has had. The improvement program has brought at least 5 million dollars of additional revenue annually to Alabama farmers. These have benefited all of us directly or indirectly. A lot of people have had a part in establishing one variety communities and increasing the length of Alabama staple from 7/8-inch and shorter to 15-16-inch and longer. The major credit, though, belongs to Auburn and to the Farm Extension Service under the direction of P. O. Davis. Three pioneers who preach all over Alabama the gospel of better quality cotton to be marketed at premium prices were Donald Comer, J. C. Lowery and the late Dr. M. F. Jackson, of Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company. The growing of good quality cotton, like the preservation of human liberty, requires eternal vigilance. The natural tendency is for the staple to deteriorate. Then, too, after all farmers have improved their quality, no farmer has the incentive of a price premium over his neighbor. The higher price is still there, though, as any farmer who reverts to inferior seed will find out.

Under the high cost economy we have built up in this country, cotton mills cannot exist without tariff protection, nor can farmers continue to grow cotton without comparable economic consideration from our government. I believe this to be a provable fact.

Peanuts Hailed as Principal Money Crop in South Georgia

By BILL BORING.
Constitution Staff Writer.

AMERICUS, Ga., Sept. 9.—Hammond, of South Carolina, hurled to Yankee senators back in 1859 this defy: "No power on earth dares make war on cotton. Cotton is king." Cotton indeed was king in that critical hour in the nation's history, selling at a dollar a pound. It had been king ever since Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, starting the machine age in America and saddling the one-crop system on the south.

And cotton remained king for 100 years. Sherman and Grant could not dethrone it. Harsh Republican tariffs couldn't shake it from its pedestal. It rolled with the ravages of the boll weevil, but came back fighting. The money crop challengers came out one by one for contests, but each time cotton emerged the winner and still champion.

Peanuts weren't even heard of back in Confederate war days. They were just a nuisance to South American farmers. It was not until 1900 that they came into this country. They came in by the back door as a food for hogs, and they received such a kicking and cuffing around that they inspired a new dictionary adjective, "peanut," meaning something very lowly. But it wasn't long before someone discovered that roasting and salting would turn the peanut into a delicacy. Then someone hit on peanut butter, and someone else found that peanuts when crushed produced an excellent oil for multiple uses.

CARVER EXPERIMENT

And over in Tuskegee, Ala., an ex-slave, Dr. George Washington Carver, began to unfold still more mysteries of the peanut. His research revealed hundreds of uses to which the peanut might be put both as a food and a utility. Dr. Carver's amazing peanut research was a laboratory sensation.

It was about this time that the boll weevil struck cotton. One crop southern farmers by the thousands were plunged into bankruptcy. They were still debt-ridden when 10 years later the price of cotton hit bottom. A glutted domestic market and increased world competition was disastrous. Farmers couldn't give their cotton away. Farmers in this section had had enough.

They began to cast about for

other sources of income. They hit day it's a 200 million dollar industry on peanuts among other things, including livestock. They turned

the peanut from a food for hogs into the ranking money crop of this section; and today—the peanut butter in England until American soldiers brought it in. They didn't know about peanuts as a food in Russia until lend-lease brought them in. Now the Russians are cultivating Ukraine acres with peanuts shipped from Georgia.

PAY FULL HOMAGE

And here in Americus grateful citizens will pay full homage to the new money crop king. They're going to erect one of the finest and biggest monuments you've ever seen to king peanut. Right on the courthouse square it will go up just as soon as building materials become available according to W. Lott, president of the Americus and Sumter County Chamber of Commerce.

There will be a magnificent ceremony and speeches glorifying and honoring the peanut. Eminent statesmen will be invited. Senators George and Russell, Governor Ellis Arnall, and Congressman Stephen Pace, of the third congressional district of Georgia, embracing 24 of the biggest peanut-producing counties of Georgia, leading peanut producing state in the nation.

Here's the running score based on estimates of the Georgia Crop Reporting Service and the U. S. Department of Agriculture of how the peanut dethroned cotton as Georgia's crop king.

BIG MONEY CROP

Georgia's one million acres of peanuts now being harvested and processed in 41 counties will yield an estimated \$73,891,560. This includes only edible peanuts sold in the commercial market. The money value of the runner varieties used to fatten hogs will hike the peanut crop into the 85 to 90 million dollar bracket.

Georgia's cotton crop based on an August 1 appraisal, the same date used for the peanut estimates, will mean \$82,928,000 to Georgia farmers in cotton and cottonseed. Thus peanuts will top cotton by approximately a half million dollars according to the estimates.

This record-breaking return is considered by peanut farmers to be particularly significant because peanuts are grown in only 42 counties as against 144 for cotton.

Back in 1916 the United States entire crop value in peanuts totaled only 34 million dollars. To-

boro. It will be one of the most modern plants in existence.

Seventy-five thousand dollars' worth of peanut plant extensions are in process in Vidalia. All over the peanut-growing area, from the Chickasawatchee in the west to the Ogeechee in the east, the industry is expanding. These men who dared tradition by pioneering in a new field are keeping their vision. They're hard hitting, progressive and hard working; and they believe in peanuts.

WAR BOOSTED PEANUTS

The war gave peanuts a terrific boost. They hadn't heard of peanut butter in England until American soldiers brought it in. They didn't know about peanuts as a food in Russia until lend-lease brought them in. Now the Russians are cultivating Ukraine acres with peanuts shipped from Georgia.

The war gave peanuts a boost, but with the end of the war the leaders of the industry know they will have to continue to promote their product to keep it in public demand. The National Peanut Council with this end in view will spend a million dollars. Too much depends on peanuts not to give them the backing they deserve, south Georgians point out. Peanuts have been one of the crop saviors of this section. They mean money in the pockets of every person living in these 42 peanut-growing counties. Shelling plants, oil-crushing plants, peanut butter processors, confectionaries — all are going full blast, paying out thousands of dollars in wages.

EXPANSION PLANNED

Over in Dawson, Cinderella Foods, embracing among its myriad of plants the world's largest peanut butter factory, is employing hundreds of people shipping its product into 39 states. The value of its manufactured products this year will top four million dollars. The peanut butter plant, looking ahead to bigger business, is installing new, completely automatic equipment for conveying, roasting and packing purposes. A new peanut salting plant is going up. Two railroad sidings are being extended to facilitate shipments and unloading of incoming materials.

Candy, oleomargarine, mayonnaise factories and a cooking oil refinery will be built as the peanut industry grows. The Georgia Peanut Company, already operating 12 shelling plants in the state, is building a new one in States-

Tenancy Report

Printed copies of the report made to Gov.

Sparks by a committee he appointed to study farm tenancy conditions in Alabama now are available. The urgency of the problem—and the importance of efforts to mitigate it—are briefly and graphically summarized in the fact that in Alabama the proportion of farm tenant-operators on the land is 58.8 per cent. This compares to a proportion of 38.7 per cent for the United States as a whole.

In the early part of the last great depression, in 1930, the percentages were up to 64.7 per cent for this state, 42.4 per cent for the country.

Obviously when men do not own the land they till, it is likely to suffer. And the conditions of the tenants themselves generally are on a lower level than that of farm owners. The result, of course, is to increase and intensify human and economic problems affecting all the people.

The tenant problem is therefore a problem for all American citizens. It affects every one of us, particularly here in the South.

* * *

Frank R. Broadway was chairman of the governor's committee, with Miss Loula Dunn and I. J. Browder as the other members. The facts they have gathered should have the attention of all our citizens. Here is a subject which many groups and organizations in the state might well make a special order of business. Alabamians looking for an opportunity for public service and for a broader grasp of our common problems have a chance to do something worth while in this connection.

The committee's report probably will be reflected in legislative reactions at the coming session of our lawmakers. Informed public opinion can do much to obtain intelligent action in this field.

The conclusions and recommendations of the committee are set forth with clarity and force. Increasing income and purchasing are put down as fundamental to progress in combating evil conditions. The essential part of education in any creative program is rightly stressed. "... Only through educational campaigns can the tenant and his family be given the incentive to improve their lot, and thus their section of the country generally."

* * *

"First and favored" among the committee's recommendations is that "a written lease between landlord and tenant would cure many of the evils of farm tenancy." Other recommendations are:

"Both the landlord and tenant should be required to keep adequate records of outlays for which either party will claim compensation.

"Industrial expansion should be encouraged, with particular emphasis on small industry in agricultural communities. This would help to absorb the surplus rural population

and to increase the purchasing power of the farm families.

"In cooperation with the Department of Education, a thorough appraisal of the rural educational system should be made.

"Increased emphasis should be placed upon adult education through such organizations as the Soil Conservation Service, Farm Extension Service, Farm Security Administration and related services.

"Minimum standards for housing and sanitary facilities should be set up. However, such standards should be extremely moderate and limited to things primarily connected with health and sanitation, such as sanitary outside toilets, screens, tight roofs and other reasonable stipulations."

These are definite points for attack on the problem within the state. The tenancy evil is national and the federal government has its own share of responsibility for dealing with it. But no adequate solution ever is going to be reached without the active and persistent cooperation of the people in their own communities and states. What do we people in Alabama propose to do in the fight on the evils of tenancy?

Sharecroppers Ruled Ineligible For Gov't Readjustment Allowances

The Atlanta Daily World Atlanta, Georgia
9-27-45
Benefits Denied

By Veteran's
Administration

According to a recent decision by the Veterans' Administration, "sharecroppers" are employed but not self-employed and are not eligible for readjustment allowances, Ben T. Hulet, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Labor, revealed this week.

Hulet stated that in the first appeal of its type, a veteran of World War II, who was a sharecropper tending ten acres of land in Mississippi, was denied benefits by the Veterans' Administration and that the decision may have a far reaching effect on Veterans' self-employed claims filed by sharecroppers in the various states.

The Administrator, in making his decision, held that in order to be eligible for self-employment allowances, a veteran must be fully engaged in self-employment in an independent establishment, trade business, or other vocation during the month for which he claims allowances.

TENDING LAND

In the case of the Mississippi veteran it was shown that he was merely tending the land while the landlord furnished the land, all the stock and tools. The landlord also kept the stock and it was fed by him. The veteran did furnish half the fertilizer which was charged against his account at settlement time.

From a point of authority it was also shown that the landlord told the veteran what to do and if he refused to carry out instructions he could be forced to get off the farm. The landlord also was to sell the cotton when it was gathered and give the veteran his part of the receipts and the corn was to be divided.

In citing the difference between one independently engaged and a laborer, the Administrator declared, "The self-employed has an estate in the land for a term and consequently he has a right of

property in the crop. If he pays a share of the crop for rent, it is he that divides off to the landlord his share and until such division, right of property and of possession in the whole is his."

NO LAND ESTATE

The Administrator continued, "The laborer has no estate in the land. That remains in the landlord. Consequently, though he has, in some sense, the possession of the crop it is only the possession of the servant and is in law that of the landlord. The landlord must divide off to him his share of the crop for his labor."

Based upon the direction and control exercised by the landlord over the Mississippi veteran and the crop, the veteran was considered ineligible to receive any allowance.

"Bona fide farmers, as well as other veterans who are fully engaged in an independent establishment, trade, business, or other vocation may receive self-employment benefits for the months when their income is less than \$100," Commissioner Hulet stated.

Tell It To Old Grandma

Please try to confine your letters to 300 words.

SOUTHERN FARM TENANT HOUSES

Editor, The Advertiser: 6-21-45

At last Washington's national planners and housing experts have come 'round to the conclusion that something needs to be done to improve Southern tenant houses. No one doubts their being right for once, especially one who (as I) was born and reared in a Southern tenant house. In fact, I've lived in tenant houses all my life and in different states of the South from South Carolina to Central Texas. I've yet to live in but one decent tenant house and stayed there for only one year. The rest were what the "experts" would now call "very inadequate."

Yes, it is so: Strewn about over the South are tens of thousands of farm tenant houses that are without credit to either owner or occupant. Many to start with were only crudely built and have been kept ill repaired ever since, and now actually would be better suited for farm animals than for people. And the least tenable are usually occupied by Negroes who are less concerned with upkeep.

Maybe the experts have got around to seeing and, since seeing is believing, maybe they will and can do something for Southern farm tenants in the way of housing. But just how are they going to do it? Southern owners who rent their land are not used to being ordered around by any one as to the improving their tenant houses. It's highly improbable that they are going to care for such either! Most of them are used to letting the tenants do whatever repairs or building is considered necessary. The tenants are not usually interested in doing much improving since they are never sure how long they may stay where they are. The general idea is to do only enough to "get by." And many landlords, believe it or not, seem to have adopted the same idea. 6-21-45 AL2-

The Southern farm tenant system is now a very unstable business. Thousands of families move almost yearly, not necessarily because they can't get along with landlords but largely because they're in the habit of moving. They even seem to find it fascinating.

Because of that, the problem of inducing the owners to make any real improvements on the rented property is quite complex. The first need seems to me to be that of educating tenants to the desirability of staying where they are, rather than have the perpetual worry and expense of ever trying to find "something better." And the owner as well as the tenant needs to be impressed with the need for more co-operation for a better relation between them; he should come to realize more that by encouraging the tenant to stay on his land he is helping his own standard, because if the tenant stays, improvements are much more apt to be made than if he moves and somebody else takes his place.

Landowner and renter alike must come to know the truth of the matter: that rolling stones not only gather no moss, they help no others gather any. When they so think, I believe the Southern problem of tenant housing, may largely solve itself, without the government going to much

Landlord-Tenant Relationship

expense to that end and creating much resentment among land-owners. Inducingship.

When it is remembered that the clients of the FSA rehabilitation program are tenants and sharecroppers who cannot obtain credit elsewhere to enable them to continue farming, this achievement

Town Creek, Ala.

HENRY H. WATSON.

Checking the Blight of Farm Tenancy

Richmond Times Dispatch
SOME remarkable figures have been compiled by the Farm Security Administration in Region V, embracing Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina, on the extent of farm ownership among former tenant farmers and sharecroppers who have been assisted by the FSA. They show that one out of every 14 full owners of farms in those four States attained ownership through the FSA. In one of them—Georgia—the proportion is almost one in 10.

This is striking proof of the effectiveness of the FSA's program in checking the blight of farm tenancy. Within a relatively few years, this program has demonstrated its soundness.

The alarming spread of farm tenancy in the United States became a cause of national concern in the early 1930's. This agricultural blight was most pronounced in the South, where in some States the proportion of farmers who were tenants or sharecroppers ranged as high as 60 or 70 per cent, but farm tenancy was spreading in other sections also. It was recognized that this was an unwholesome condition affecting not only agriculture, but the entire national economy. Something clearly had to be done to check and reverse the tendency. Va.

An attack on the problem was made under the BANKHEAD-JONES Tenant Purchase Act, which offered Federal assistance to qualified tenants and sharecroppers in acquiring farms of their own. This program, administered by the Farm Security Administration, has proved highly successful, although Congress has never authorized sufficient appropriations to enable it to do the job that needs to be done. Under the BANKHEAD-JONES Act, tenant-purchase loans are made on the basis of a maximum repayment period of 40 years, at 3 per cent interest. The record of repayments has been excellent. 10-14-45

In the four States of Region V 9,921 new farm owners purchased their farms under the BANKHEAD-JONES program. Another 1,683 family-type farms were sold to tenants and sharecroppers in the liquidation of projects under the terms of that act. But these were not the only farmers who were enabled to acquire farms by the assistance of the FSA. A total of 6,809 of them were tenants and sharecroppers who had received assistance in the FSA's rehabilitation program and who bought farms outside of the BANKHEAD-JONES program. This is a newly revealed aspect of the effectiveness of the FSA in promoting farm own-

members of Congress, and others, who would cripple this constructive work by taking away the FSA's lending powers. Incidentally, it would be interesting to see a similar compilation of FSA clients who have purchased farms outside of the BANKHEAD-JONES program in Region IV, which includes Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky. The results in this region are probably comparable to those in Region V.

is all the more impressive. Rehabilitation loans are not for the purpose of acquiring farms. They are made as region V. habilitation and farm-operating loans, usually repayable over a five-year period at 5 per cent interest. The borrower begins by renting a farm. He receives technical guidance from the FSA in the operation of a diversified farming program. He receives training for the responsibilities of farm management and, eventually, farm ownership. In Region V 6,809 of these clients have been so successful that they have purchased farms outside of the BANKHEAD-JONES program, obtaining credit from the Federal Land Bank, insurance companies, banks and other sources.

The 18,413 new farm owners in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina who have thus been helped toward ownership by the FSA under both the BANKHEAD-JONES Act and the rehabilitation program constitute 7.43 per cent of the 247,741 full farm owners in those States. Full owners are those who own and operate farms as distinguished from those who own a part and rent another part of the land they operate.

E. S. MORGAN, regional director of Region V, believes that the spread of tenancy in those States has been checked. He indicates the value of this achievement by saying:

"These new farm owners have a stake in democracy which they could never have as tenants and sharecroppers. They now own a piece of the United States. They are not confronted with the prospect of moving from year to year. They have an interest in building and saving the land. Their civic interests and responsibilities have been broadened as a result of farm ownership. Their purchasing power has enormously increased and it is felt in virtually every town and community." 10-14-45

As an indication of the effect of their increased purchasing power, Mr. MORGAN cites a survey of the new farm owners made in one Georgia county which disclosed that their families now spend from 400 to 500 per cent more in the normal channels of trade than they spent before.

Besides enabling 18,413 tenants and sharecroppers to become farm owners in that region, the FSA has been the means of saving 1,948 family-type farms from foreclosure, and has aided 2,484 farm owners to pay off mortgages on their farms.

This record proves the soundness of the FSA program. Yet there are some

The exhaustive report dealing with the evils of farm tenancy, together with recommendations for tackling the problem, which was recently submitted to Gov. Sparks should command the attention of the thinking people of Alabama.

Prepared by a committee composed of Frank R. Broadway, director of the Department of Industrial Relations; Miss Loula Dunn, commissioner of public welfare, and I. J. Browder, personnel director, the question is discussed at length.

According to the report, Alabama's proportion of farm tenancy increased from 58 per cent in 1900 to 65 per cent in 1930, with a drop to 59 per cent in 1940, a figure that is way above the national average of 39 per cent. Because of debt status, the situation is actually worse than the figures indicate, with nearly 76 per cent of all Alabama farms in 1940 in the hands of landlords and mortgage holders, the study shows. Contrary to popular belief, it is pointed out, the greater part, or 58 per cent, of Alabama farm tenants are white—the proportion of colored tenants has been decreasing for several decades.

Some of the bad effects of tenancy were listed as follows:

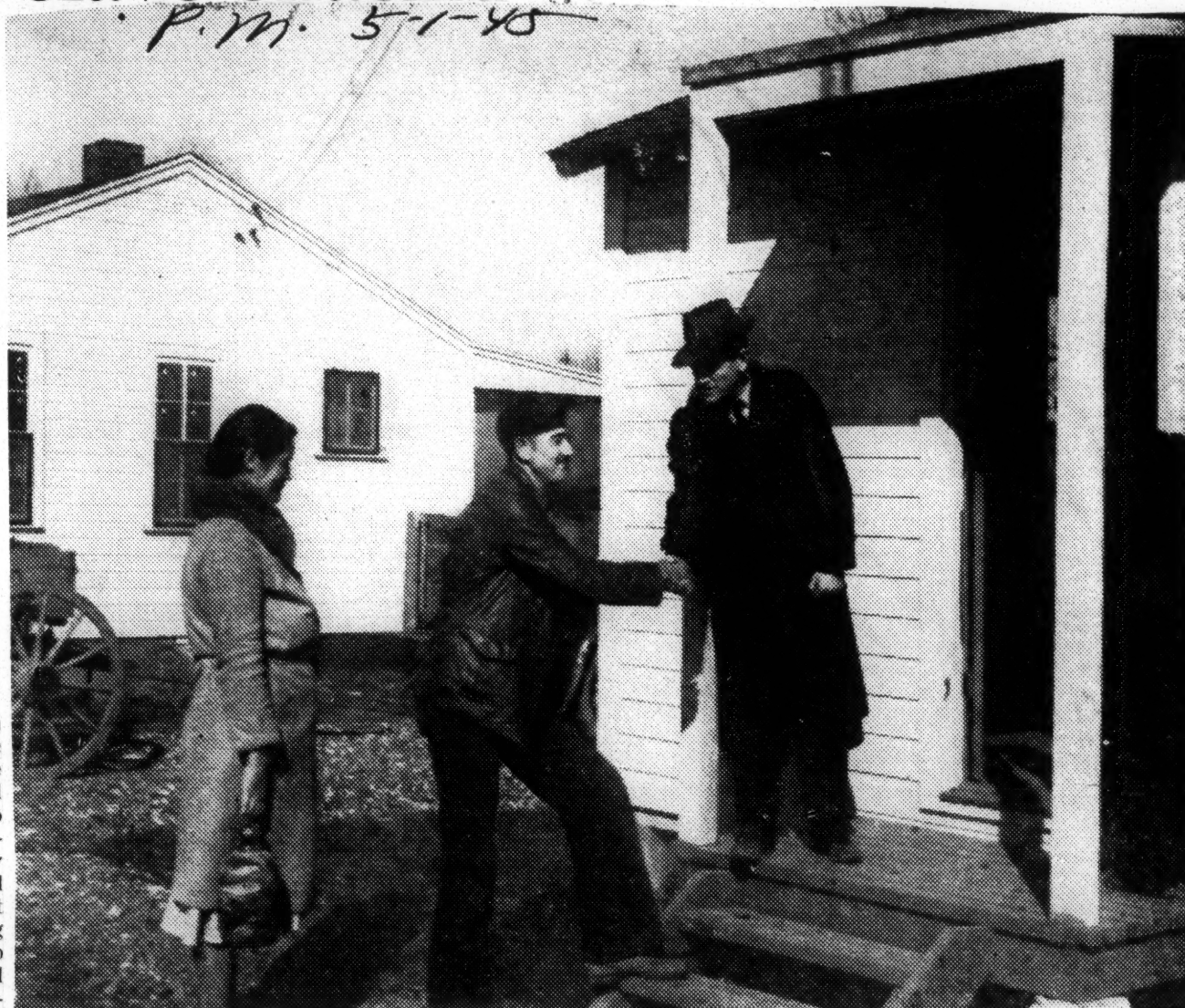
"Because tenant families are so much on the move, the education of their children suffers due to frequent changes and time lost moving. Tenants spend less for medical care than farm owners and are handicapped in fighting disease. Tenants are much more poorly housed than owners, the average value of dwellings occupied by farm tenants in Alabama being only half that of owner-occupied homes."

The report recognized a definite relationship between tenancy and soil erosion, since the tenant who expects to remain but a short time on a farm has little incentive to conserve and improve the soil. "Tenancy has contributed to soil depletion; soil depletion has in turn contributed materially to the expansion of tenancy and the further impoverishment of tenants and croppers," the report said. It stressed also what was termed "erosion of our society" resulting from tenant evils. Families long subject to poverty, insecurity and lack of normal social contacts are likely to lose incentive for improving their lot, to say nothing of a desire to participate in the cultural life of the community, the report noted. "The deficiencies in standards of living which make their bodies easy prey to biological parasites make them equally easy prey to economic and social parasites."

The committee offered recommendations which included: A written lease between landlord and tenant, with both required to keep records of outlays for which either will claim compensation; better education, with increased emphasis on adult education; encouragement of industrial expansion, with the idea that small industries in agricultural communities would help absorb surplus rural population, and establishment of "minimum standards" for housing and sanitary facilities.

While the problem may not be possible of complete solution now, the state, nevertheless, can give thought to adopting measures which will eliminate evils cited and bring about a general improvement in the situation. Farm tenancy is just one of the things that has been holding Alabama back and working against a strong, substantial economic structure in the state.—Anniston Star.

Tenant Farmers Lose Out, Forced Back to Slave Shacks



Congressional action ordering the Farm Security Administration to liquidate all its community projects means that the Delmo houses in Southeast Missouri will have to be abandoned. Here is a family moving into the project when it was opened. The tenant farm families came from hovels and shacks like that shown below—and now have little choice but to return to them.

Congressional Action Orders Housing Projects Liquidated

By KATH FRETSHOLD
Staff Correspondent

ST. LOUIS, May 1.—A four-year experiment in giving sharecroppers and cotton country farm laborers clean, comfortable housing, and thus making a group of scorned and rejected people independent, self-respecting members of the communities in which they live, is coming to an end in Southwest Missouri.

The experiment, conducted by the FSA (Farm Security Administration) was successful and had it been allowed to continue, would have paid for itself in dollars and

cents. Ending the FSA experiment means the Federal Government allowed to buy their homes on long term credit have just failed. Ten-580 families, some 200 of them are to be evicted from their homes and fishing and hunting clubs to be forced to move back into the shacks moved and used as clubhouses, and hovels which in Southeast Missouri are called "tenant houses." materials they contain, others to be left where they are and turned into "company houses" for lumber and alfalfa mills.

Many of the 580 families who are to be evicted are worried chiefly because return to living in "tenant houses" owned by big land "operators" means loss of their freedom to think, to speak, and talk as they please and, most important of all, to work for whom they please.

So FSA prepared to sell the 580 homes scattered in 10 farm labor communities in Southeast Missouri. Desperate efforts to have Con-

"It used to be," says Mrs. Oscar Thompson who lives in an FSA house at the project near Wardell, Mo., "that when we lived in tenant houses the landlord would dig us out and make us work for him or get out of the house. He would pay us what he wanted to pay, or nothin'."

"Here they can't order us around. We can hire out for any price we want."

Rev. David S. Burgess, of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches, who has interested himself in the plight of the FSA tenants, says: "The planters could make the tenant do what he wanted him to do, even vote his way."

"In the FSA communities they are free to think, speak, and vote any way they like."

One FSA tenant said: "Here we ain't beholden to no one." Another declared: "I won't go back to sharecroppin'—I don't care what! That was bondage; that was real slavery."

Clarence Pickett, executive secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, which has done work among the sharecroppers and tenant farmers of Southeast Missouri, says: "Living conditions (among sharecroppers in tenant houses) is as primitive as I have seen anywhere in America. Sale of the FSA homes is a step back ward."

To the women of the farm laborers' families the FSA homes represent everything that is desirable worthwhile in life. Each home has a half-acre of ground, where the tenants raise much of their own food. Each house has five rooms electric light, a supply of pure water, sanitary facilities.

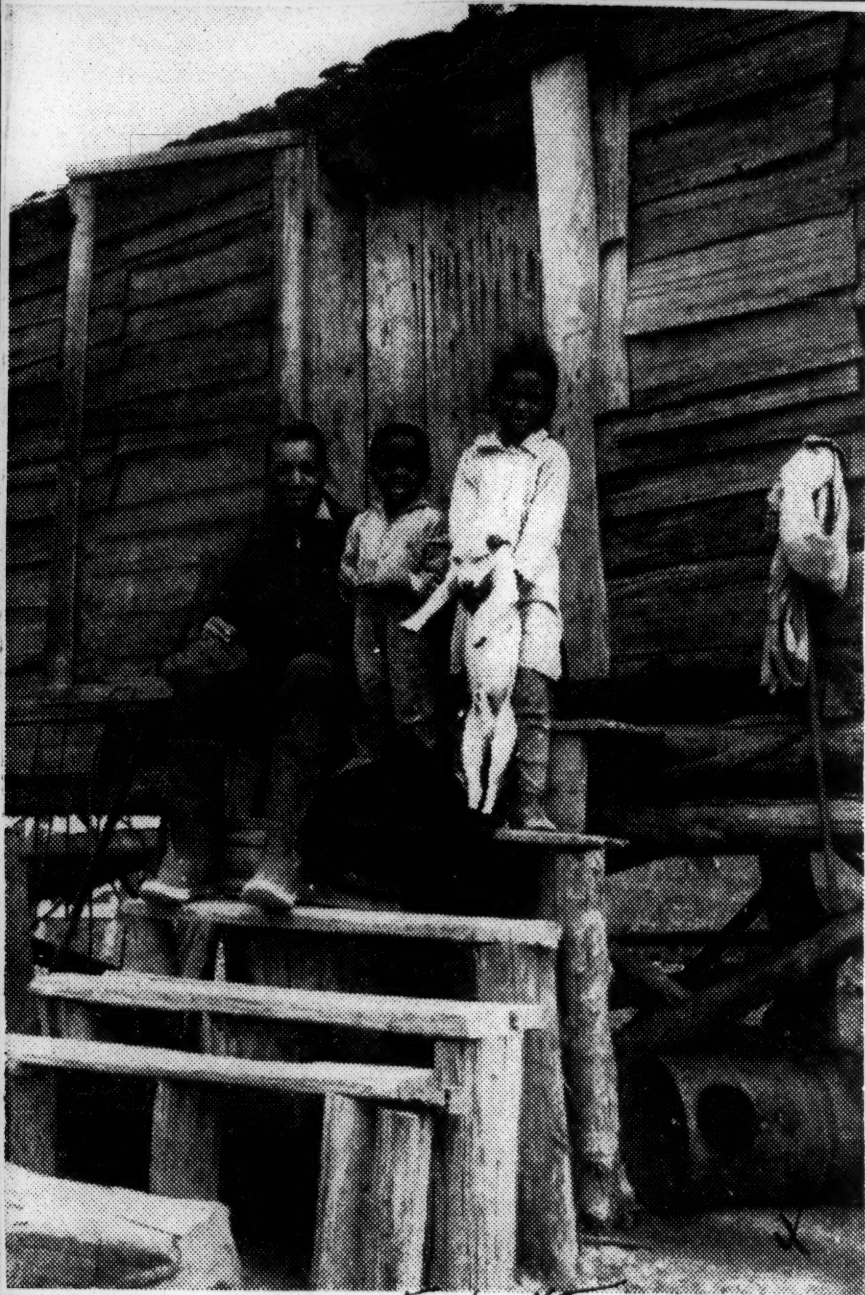
Typical Operator

At each project there is a community building, most of it occupied by a laundry, where there is hot and cold water. That hot water means clothes now are clean. When these families lived in "tenant houses," their water came from surface wells. Heating water was a big chore, so clothes never were thoroughly clean and children got skin disease. Also the privies, when they had them, were likely to be near the well and that meant filthy-borne diseases.

Because the youngsters of these FSA project families are clean, because many of the mothers got sewing machines and made new

Work or Get Out

parties in youngsters even go to parties in the nearby towns. You hardly can realize what that means to a young



The families being evicted at the Delmo Project will have to return to shacks like this.

girl who always has lived in a shack, never worn clean, neat clothes. Why, going to a party means she is accepted.

But the big landowners whose holdings are worked by the day laborers and sharecroppers who are FSA project tenants don't like that sort of stuff.

Community Building

Typical of many land and cotton gin operators is David M. Barton. He is associated with his father, P. M. Barton, in operating one of the biggest land and cotton gin enterprises in Southeast Missouri.

The younger Barton said: "They (the FSA projects) are no help to the operators. They are just a place for people who don't want to work.

"If they do work they don't like the hours or pay or something. You just can't get work out of them."

He insisted under questioning that FSA project tenants were paid

nine farm families were required to feed one the following other recommendations were city family. Today one farm family can feed made for improving the tenant's status:

Along with these changes, however, has come a corresponding shift in farm ownership and control. Between 1880 and 1930 farm tenancy in the United States increased from 25 per cent of the farmers to 42 per cent. Since then the percentage has been reduced to 39 per cent, due largely to the movement of tenants into the wage-earning class. Moreover, the number of farms of less than 50 acres increased by about one-third during the same period. In addition, there has been a similar increase, though slightly less, in the per cent of farms of 1,000 acres and over. More and more, the acreage owned by farmers themselves has decreased and the size and number of farms owned by absentee landlords has increased. Although production has increased enormously for the country as a whole, farming has become highly commercialized and the small owner often has been unable to take advantage of improved methods.

The result of this trend has been an increase in insecurity, share-cropping, and sub-standard living and health standards. The Southern States feel the effect of tenancy most of all. Alabama is somewhat typical. Governor Chauncey Sparks' special farm tenancy committee recently reported that 59 per cent of Alabama's farmers are tenants. More serious still, is the fact that in 1940 about 76 per cent of all farms in the State were in the hands of landlords and mortgage holders. Farm tenancy must be attacked in earnest, for it is a major special problem that affects our whole nation.

Living Today

Montgomery Advertiser
By ARLIE B. DAVIDSON

REMEDIES FOR TENANCY

The plight of millions of farmers in the United States, due to the operation of our tenancy system, must be attacked in the light of the total consequences to the farmers and our whole society, just rights of families who seek to make their own way in this world, and the potentialities wrapped up in them. Obviously, the problem cannot be solved wholly by the farmers themselves, nor can it be solved in a short period of time. The system is too deeply entrenched to yield to any quick or haphazard method. There must be adequate facts backed by a sane philosophy of the whole farm problem as it relates to all concerned in a democracy. Moreover, there must be definite regulation backed by governmental authority. Otherwise, conditions will result in increasing evil to our country, as well as to the tenant farming group.

The Governor's special committee on farm tenancy in Alabama has made a recent report which is somewhat typical of the suggestions made by other fact-finding and program-suggesting bodies in the nation. The specific recommendations of this committee stress the following procedures:

1. A written lease between landlord and tenant, including certain specific provisions.
 2. Encouragement of industrial expansion, with particular emphasis on small industries in agricultural communities.
 3. A thorough appraisal of the rural educational system with increased emphasis on a program of adult education.
 4. Establishment of minimum standards of housing and sanitary facilities.
- In 1937, a special committee on farm tenancy made its report to Congress, in which

Labor's Closest Allies in Rural America

The Worker
EVIDENCE that the labor movement is concerning itself more and more with its natural allies in the countryside is supplied by a splendid issue of the CIO Economic Outlook which is devoted to presenting the case for farm and labor solidarity. By cartoon and short paragraphs, the case is presented with great effect, especially labor's side of it. (Anyone wishing it may write the CIO Department of Research and Education, 718 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C. 10c.)

In giving the farm picture, stress is laid upon how prices in a nationwide market govern farm prosperity, how farm income has been so restricted that today over 80 percent of the homes have neither running water, refrigerator nor inside toilet. Facilities of all kinds, especially medical, are shown to be far below city standards, resulting in a higher proportion of rural army rejections than urban.

But the report also divides up farmers into groups which deserves comment. It states that of the six million farms:

- One and one-half million are part-time farms where part or full-time wage workers live.
- Half a million are retired farmers, widows or pensioners.
- One million are "mistake" farms. "They are too small, or the land too poor, or capital too lacking to permit more than a sorry living."

by Lem Harris

- Three million are real farms, using power and machinery, and receiving about 85 percent of the total U.S. gross farm income.

Notice that the report refers to the last three million as the "real" farms in a manner which would lead one to conclude that this was the group of greatest importance to the cause of the people. Precisely the opposite is the case.

The facts of the report are accurate. Half of America's farmers have but a small part in filling the national bread basket. The resources of this lower half are mostly used up in producing food for their own families, supplemented by some form of outside income. Their capital investment in buildings, land and machinery is negligible compared to the tens of thousands invested by their power farming neighbors. Because they are not important producers, they are viewed with a degree of scorn by the upper half, and especially by the crowd around the county courthouse that handles the politics of the county.

But the CIO bulletin makes the worst of mistakes when it joins the reactionaries who brush aside the three million rural poor. If this were to be labor's policy, it would mean turning its back upon its best allies. It is turning its back upon its best allies.

The political role of the rural poor is of a

progressive character. Proof of this appears in a state like Minnesota. Here the progressive Farmer-Labor-Democrat Party finds its strength not only in the cities but in the rural vote of the upper half of the state. The upper half includes the cut-over area where soil is thin and crops more uncertain. Here are to be found the farmers whose lives have been pinched by hardships, but who have learned that political action can bring more farm security than good crops.

In the deep South, of course, the poor white and Negro sharecroppers are mostly disfranchised and so temporarily blocked from their proper political role. But it is obvious that these rural poor and not the landlord class constitute labor's friends in the South.

In struggles to come, the rural poor will be heard from. Three million is too large a number to submerge. Communists who have worked and lived with farmers know the dignity and the deep interest in the nation's affairs that is to be found in many a farm home of very low income.

Eloquent evidence of these facts could be supplied by one of our country's great figures, Mother Ella Reeve Bloor, who, in addition to her long history as labor's militant leader of strikes, also spent many years organizing farmers, bringing inspiration and a will to fight into hundreds of such homes. She is still doing that, working out from her farm home in Pennsylvania.

Over Half South's Farm Workers Colored

The Informer
WASHINGTON, D. C.—Colored

farm workers played an increasing part in the agricultural production program in the South. In 1945, a U. S. Department of Agriculture survey shows.

The survey reveals that during last March when USDA's Bureau of Agricultural Economics made the study, colored workers made up to 53 per cent of the South's hired farm labor force and 30 per cent of all workers employed on farms throughout the country. In 1940 nonwhites composed only 25 per cent of the U. S. hired farm workers. It is pointed out that colored women made up to 19 per cent of the 460,000 non-white farm workers employed in the South last March.

However, colored farm workers in the South received lower wages than white. The March survey shows that white male workers in the South were paid 18 per cent more per day on an average than colored, but both colored and white farm workers in the South were receiving significantly lower wages than farm workers in other sections. The lower rates were reflected in lower weekly earnings from farm work.

For example, while the average cash weekly wages in the West were \$27.20 in the Northeast, \$19.40, and \$16.30, in the North Central region, \$16.30, in the South the weekly wage was only \$11.20.

Of the two most important rates paid in the South—per day and per hour—the differential in average rates paid whites and colored workers was reported sharpest for those employed by the day. The study shows that whites received an average of \$2.60 per day, while colored male workers, mostly colored, received only \$1.80 per day.

On the hourly basis, however, whites averaged 39 per cent per hour and colored, 38 cents per hour. Women averaged 30 cents per hour.

A greater proportion of the hired help in the South were employed at short-time seasonal jobs than workers in the North. Only 48 per cent of the hired farm workers in the South were reported regularly employed on the same farm for as much as 6 months of the year. This compared with an estimate of almost 80 percent regular employment in the Northeast and North Central regions, and 45 percent in the west. However, the wage rate in the west was substantially higher than that in the South. In fact, 71 percent of the hired farm workers paid day rates in the West were receiving \$4 per day or more, while only 9 percent were receiving \$4 per day more in the South, and 36 percent were receiving less than \$2 per day.

The survey also shows that women, boys, and older men made up a large part of the South's farm labor force. Women numbered 121,000, boys under 18 numbered 87,000, and men over 45 totaled 185,000. Eighty-three percent of all hired female workers were employed in the South as were 61 percent of all boys employed on farms.

The report points out that wage rates are generally less standardized in agriculture than in industry. While price rates for certain operations are said to be fairly uniform in some areas, the great majority of hired workers during March last year were reported to be paid on a time basis at a rate individually agreed upon by the farmer and the worker.

4c-1945

Kentucky

stricken consume the enormous taxes paid by the rich. 10-27-45

Recently a white man shot and killed a 17-year-old Negro, claimed he did it in self-defense and the authorities let him off on a \$500 bond.

These authorities are blind to the fact that they are encouraging white men to kill white men also upon the flimsiest pretext, and they are driving, not only the common labor of out the State, but the worth-while Negro, and hundreds of white men who want to live where life is more secure.

O. SINGLETON.

Louisville.

Retribution

Louisville, Ky.
To the Editor of The Courier-Journal

White women, and white children who should be in school, are on the farms cutting corn and tobacco and helping their husbands harvest, because gross injustice in our courts and the abominable inequality of our school system have driven thousands of Negroes from the State. Thousands annually are still leaving, which leaves the white man poorer and poorer. It leaves him more illiterate and imposes a heavier tax burden upon the comparative few who have to pay the taxes, while the illiterate and the poverty

OKLAHOMA FARMER MAKES GOOD IN CALIFORNIA AS DAIRYMAN AFTER MANY HARD EXPERIENCES

Black Dispatch Okla. City, Okla.
Buys Cows on Credit and Makes Payments
By Selling Milk and Cream

HOPES TO OWN PRODUCTIVE FARM SOME DAY

SAN FRANCISCO.—(ANP)—The story of a Negro farmer who came to California from Oklahoma and rose from cotton picker to dairyman despite obstacles which would have overwhelmed most men, was told this week by the Farm Security Administration.

FSA said the story, that of Phillips and his wife are raising Romeo Phillips and his wife, Bet-as much of their family food supply, of Dos Palos, is one of "re-ply as possible. They have three markable achievement and pro-pigs, a few chickens, and several mise."

In the depression year 1936 Phil many quarts of food every year, lips, now in his early 30's, was a but the high alkaline content of sharecropper near Stroud, Okla. their irrigation water prevents her He made good crops but prices from growing a family vegetable were disastrously low—corn was garden.

35 cents a bushel and cotton \$40 After 10 years of effort Phillips a bale. At the end of his year's hopes soon to reach his goal—work Phillips and his bride found ownership of an adequate-sized, themselves in debt. productive farm. He may apply for

In 1937 Philip and his wife an FSA farm purchase loan and, came to California. He worked a if the application is approved, bor-year for a Los Angeles utility row the full purchase price of a then the couple followed the crops family-type farm costing not more as migrant harvest hands. In 1941 than \$12,000. Repayments would he worked in a Vallejo shipyard be spread over 40 years at three but after a year in the city re-percent interest. 11-17-45

turned to cotton fields with his wife and two daughters, Joyce, now 7, and Argrott, now 6. Phillips was picking cotton near Dos Palos when he decided to try a comeback as a farmer. He asked a local woman for a job milking cows for a share of the product. He didn't get the job, but he did get nine cows and a bull on credit with the understanding that the cream check would go to his creditor until the cows were paid for. Nine months later he owned the cows. Later FSA loaned Phillips \$500 to buy an additional four cows, all his 20-acre rented farm will support. 11-17-45

"I've seen a good many people try what Phillips did, but I never saw one succeed," says Eugene E. Shirley, county FSA supervisor. "It takes uncommon courage and uncommon ability to pull yourself by your bootstraps from cotton picker to dairyman."